

Experience with HIV/STD Prevention Counseling with a Rapid HIV Test and Counseling Quality Assurance (RESPECT-2)

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Background

- Multi-center randomized controlled trial of HIV testing and counseling interventions for STD prevention
- Participants randomized to either:
 - (1) Standard HIV testing and 2 counseling sessions 1 to 2 weeks apart; or
 - (2) Rapid HIV testing and 2 counseling sessions at the same visit
- Followed-up for 1 year with STD screening & questionnaire every 3 months



Objectives

1. To describe the RESPECT-2 protocol for prevention counseling with a rapid HIV test
2. To describe methods used in the RESPECT-2 study to assure quality prevention counseling



Prevention Counseling Protocols General Principles

- Structured protocols with multiple components
- Use of open-ended questions
- Suggested questions for each component as a guide
- Data-gathering and routine use of informational messages discouraged
- Focus on specific risk circumstances, risk pattern and risk triggers and vulnerabilities



Prevention Counseling Protocols General Principles (continued)

- Positive reinforcement of past and intended efforts at risk reduction
- Identification & discussion of conflicts between client's concern about HIV risk, and risky behavior (dissonance)
- Stepwise reduction of risk in small achievable steps
- Client-specific risk-reduction plan



Single Visit (Rapid Test) Prevention Counseling Protocol

- **Initial Session (10-18 minutes)**
 - Introduction and orientation
 - Enhancement of client's self-perception of risk
 - Exploration of the specifics of the most recent risk incident
 - Review of previous risk-reduction experiences
 - Synthesis of risk incident and risk pattern
- **Results Session (10-21 minutes)**
 - Provision of HIV test results
 - Negotiation of a risk-reduction plan
 - Identification of sources of support & provision of referrals (if indicated)



How Single Visit Protocol Differs from Standard 2-visit Protocol

- Need to explain rapid test procedure and the meaning of results. (Preliminary positive results need confirmation)
- Need to focus the client if distracted by the prospect of receiving his/her HIV result the same visit as the HIV test
- Greater emphasis on use of referrals and social support to enhance risk-reduction



Observations - Single Visit Prevention Counseling Protocol

- Single-visit HIV counseling protocol is acceptable to counselors and clients
- Efficacy relative to the standard 2-visit prevention counseling protocol will not be known until the end of the study



Methods - Counseling Quality Assurance (QA)

- Objective is to ensure that counselors adhere to study counseling protocols and do quality counseling
- Counseling QA is a routine ongoing activity
- Approximately 15% of counseling sessions are observed by a trained supervisor or taped and reviewed later



Methods - Counseling Quality Assurance (QA) (continued)

- Structured QA forms are used to assess adherence to counseling protocols
- Counselors & supervisor do group tape reviews during routine case conferences
- Counselors are given ongoing feedback & mentoring to improve adherence to protocols & counseling skills



Advantages of In-Person Observation

- Able to provide immediate feedback to the counselor
- Able to observe the counselor's non-verbal communication including counselor's body language, eye contact and demeanor
- Experience the complexity of the interpersonal dynamics between the client and the counselor



Advantages of Taping

- More flexibility in timing of review
- Able to replay parts of session for clarification
- Able to use taped sessions as a training tool
- Opportunity to track improvement in counseling skills



Observations - Counseling QA

- Approximately 80% of participants approached have agreed to have counseling taped
- Initial counselor reluctance & discomfort overcome once familiar with counseling QA as an ongoing & routine activity
- Counselors respond positively to feedback
- Group review of tapes promotes discussions of alternative ways to approach sessions & enhance risk-reduction plans
- A structured counseling QA protocol is useful to ensure that essential components of the session are consistently addressed and enhance the quality of the counseling



Study Group

- Long Beach: Kevin Malotte, Suzanne Padilla, Nettie DeAugustine, David Souleles, Judy Hollingshead, Erin Griffin, Christine Heusner
- Denver: John Douglas, Lesley Brooks, Ken Miller, Cornelis Rietmeijer, Mark Foster
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